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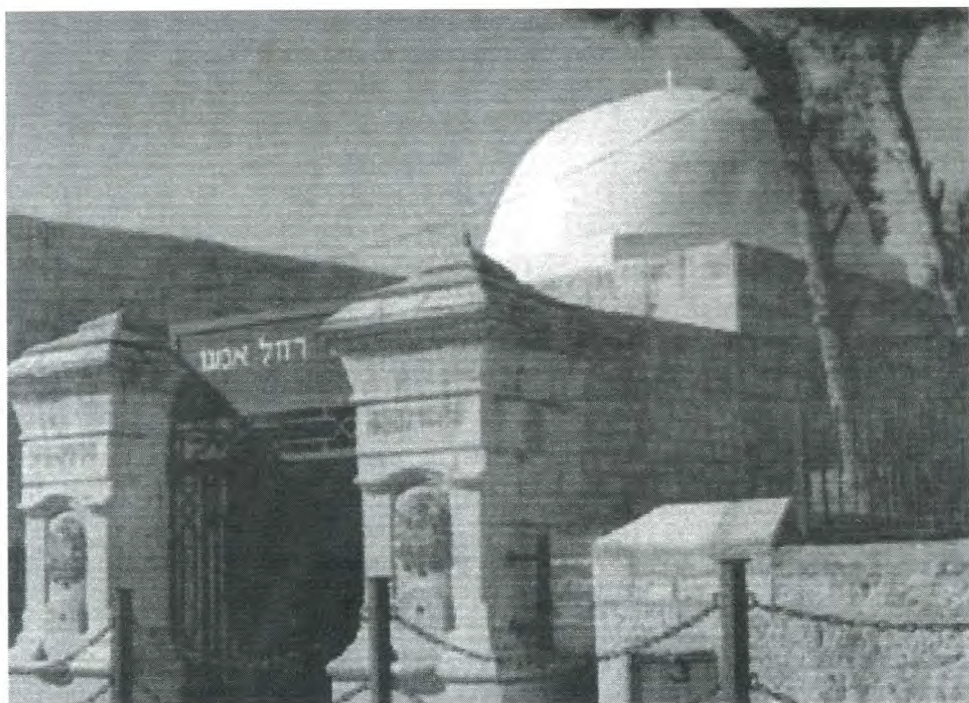
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NO.5

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2006



The Tomb of Rachel

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SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2006

EDWARD SCHUMAN, EDITOR

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The American Israel Numismatic Association (A.I.N.A.) is a cultural and educational organization dedicated to the study and collection of Israel's coinage, past and present, and all aspects of Judaic numismatics. A.I.N.A. is a democratically organized, membership oriented group, chartered as a not for profit association under the laws of The State of New York. A.I.N.A.'s primary purpose is the development of programs, publications, meetings and other activities which will bring news, history, social and related background to the study and collection of Judaic numismatics, and the advancement of the hobby. The Association supports a web page <http://amerisrael.com> in which full information about the organization and a sampling of past articles from the SHEKEL are shown. The Association attends national and regional conventions, sponsors study tours to Israel, publication of books and catalogs and other activities which will be of benefit to the members. A.I.N.A. supports Young Numismatists programs which encourage and introduce youth to our hobby. Audio-visual and slide programs are available from the A.I.N.A. archives on many Judaica subjects and are available at no cost except for transportation charges. Local Israel Numismatic Society chapters exist in several areas. Please write for further information.

The Association publishes the SHEKEL six times a year. It has been referred to as a Jewish Reader's Digest. The SHEKEL is a journal and news magazine prepared for the enlightenment and education of the membership. You are invited to submit an article for publication.

Annual Membership fees:

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President's Message

By Mel Wacks

As I write this message, Israel is again fighting for its right to exist. The story of past battles have been recorded on the coins that many of us collect - the small bronze coins issued after the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrians, that we celebrate at Hanukka; the extremely rare bronze leptons picturing the holy menorah in the Jerusalem Temple, issued by the last king of the Maccabee line - Antigonus Mattathias - as he unsuccessfully tried to fight off the forces of Herod the Great which were backed by the might of Rome; the famous silver shekels issued for five years by tiny Judaea as it again battled Roman legions, first with success but ending in defeat; and in more recent times, Israel issued its first coins in 1948 as the fledgling nation battled Arab armies. Coins are witnesses to history! There are also coins celebrating the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt ... and hopefully there will be other coins in the future that celebrate happy events.

I am sorry to report that long-time AINA member Ben Abelson passed away on July 4th at the age of 86. Ben and his wife of almost 63 years, Claire, were among the founders of the first Israel coin club in America, in Los Angeles, and they went on to produce the first educational slide programs, that can still be borrowed from our audio-visual resources (contact the library of the American Numismatic Association at 719-632-2646 for details).

I want to sincerely thank our friends at the Token and Medal Society for sharing their table with us at the recent convention of the American Numismatic Association. I highly recommend membership in this fine organization, that has published many articles on the subject of Judaic numismatics in their journal. For further information about TAMS visit www.tokenandmedal.org.

Happy Collecting,



The Editor's Page

By Edward Schuman

Israel is again at war, against a terrorist organization bent on the destruction of the state. We urge all to support Israel in its struggle and do your part in helping this democracy. As coin collectors we can assist by purchasing their coins and medals to show support.

We have had some positive results in response to our request for articles in the SHEKEL magazine. I want to thank those who complied and those who have promised to work on it.

Since my last message, we have received several calls, letters and emails regarding my health. I am happy to say that the dialysis appears to be working and I am soon scheduled to go on a cyclor machine that will do the cleansing during the night time while I sleep. This will improve the quality of our lives immensely. I particularly wish to thank Fred Schornstein, Mort Ronick and Dr. Sam Halperin for their support in donating memberships to friends and family in my honor. I have reprinted Sam's letter below.

Till the next issue



Dear Ed:

I am distressed to learn of your kidney disease and feel that you are courageously attacking the problem. By openly sharing your travail with SHEKEL readers you show yourself to be a most exceptional mensch. We all, I am sure, offer our prayers for health.

I'd like to help AINA and somehow show solidarity with you and your steadfast wife Florence. Enclosed is \$100 for which please sign up memberships for my five grandchildren as follows: Gilad Samuel Barlev, Maya Marlene Barlev, Daniel Chaim Halperin, Ariel Avraham Halperin and Talia Ruth Halperin.

All five are away at college or will be in the fall. You can send their memberships and coins % me and I will present them at our family get together either at Thanksgiving or Chanukah. When the young people settle down I'll forward their residential addresses for future mail.

For all you do and have done for AINA and for the State of Israel, thank you from the bottom of my heart. Especially in these stressful times for our people, solidarity such as you promote is a real mitzvah.

Sincerely,

Samuel Halperin

Historic Views of the Holy Land

In the 1880s

by J. Leslie Porter

J. Leslie Porter was one of the most popular writers of the Holy Land in the 19th century, and his work on Jerusalem and surrounding area is a fascinating account of the biblical sites that he knew so well from his years of living in Palestine. His work is lavishly illustrated with original drawings that show the land and its people before the arrival of Western influence

Bethlehem In sacred interest Bethlehem, though it be "little among the thousands of Judah," is only second to Jerusalem itself. Its name is a household word throughout Christendom. It is one of those Scripture sites concerning whose identity there never was, and there never can be, any doubt or controversy. The modern name Beit-Lahm, "House of Flesh," is somewhat different in sound and meaning from the ancient Hebrew Beth-Lehem, "House of Bread;" but it is doubtless a popular corruption, such as one frequently meets with in Palestine. In olden times the town was called Beth-lehem Judah, to distinguish it from another Beth-lehem in Zebulun. It was also called Ephratah, "the Fruitful;" probably for the same reason that the name "House of Bread" had been given to it.

It is encompassed by ground which, though rugged and rocky, is yet carefully cultivated, and rich in corn, vineyards, and olive-groves. There is also now, as there was in David's time, a wide and wild region of pasture land, reaching away down through the wilderness of Judah to "the rocks of the wild goats" at En-gedi on the shore of the Dead Sea.

I have again and again approached Bethlehem with feelings of deepest interest,—almost of awe. With the Bible in my hand, stirring memories of the long distant past came up on each visit fresh before me; and names, familiar to the mountain shepherds whom I met, helped me to localize many an incident of Scripture history.

I have climbed the precipitous path leading up to it from the Convent of St. Saba, on the way to Jericho; and from the Cave of Adullam in the gloomy ravine of Khureitûn; and from the conical peak of the Frank Mountain, where Herod had a fortress, and where he was buried;—I have ridden to it over the bare hill-tops from the deserted ruins of Tekoa; and I have pursued more than once the well-beaten pilgrim path from Jerusalem,—and found something new, and fresh, and instructive in every view I got.

I shall now try to give my readers a few pictures by pen and pencil of what I saw. In going from Jerusalem to Bethlehem one leaves by the Jaffa Gate, crosses the upper part of the Valley of Hinnom, looking down into the Lower Pool of Gihon, and up beyond it to the neat cottages built by Sir Moses Montefiore for poor Jews. On reaching the brow of the hill south of Hinnom, it is well to turn round and take a look at the Holy City. The hills and valleys are here seen to greater advantage than from any other point. The deepest parts of Hinnom, Tyropoeon, and Kidron are nearest us; and Zion, Moriah, and Olivet stand out prominently.

We pass on, and a gentle descent over stony ground brings us into the little plain of Rephaim, "the valley of the giants," as travelers call it, and as it is named in the Book of Joshua. It was here David gained some of his most signal victories over the Philistines. The plain is about a mile long, and descends on the west to a pleasant glen filled with roses, where the enthusiastic pilgrim may visit the Fountain of Yalo, overhung by the ruins of a chapel of some unknown age. Tradition makes it the scene of the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, and names it Philip's Fountain. The position does not answer to the apostolic narrative. There can be no doubt, however, that it is on the ancient road from Jerusalem to Gaza.

Proceeding over the plain of Rephaim, along the broad path, my attention was called to a well, which I found to be another traditional Scripture site. The story is, that the "wise men from the east," when dismissed by Herod, proceeded thus far in uncertainty. Stooping, however, according to the custom of thirsty travelers, to draw water, they suddenly saw their guiding star mirrored in the well. The tradition, if it has no other claim upon our attention, reminds us that along this very path the Magi traveled from the court of Herod to the **NEWBORN KING** in Bethlehem.

A few minutes more takes us up a rocky slope to the Convent of Elias, where, we are told, the great prophet lay down under the shade of an olive-tree, weary, hungry, and careworn, when he fled from the infamous Jezebel. On the surface of the smooth rock, just in front of the convent gate, is a slight depression, said to be that left by the prophet where he slept.

Here the Tomb of Rachel, with Bethlehem beyond, and the bleak hills of Judea in the background, suddenly bursts upon the view. The tomb is still half-a-mile distant, and Bethlehem a mile beyond; but in the clear atmosphere they are seen with great distinctness, and our natural inclination is to hasten forward and rest beside the tomb. On approaching it, we observe on the right the village of Beit Jala, with some imposing new buildings beside it. It is the Zelzah mentioned by Samuel, when sending Saul home after anointing him king at Ramah. Saul had followed the path

we have taken, after passing Jerusalem; and the words of the prophet are now called up to our mind: "When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah," etc. One is struck everywhere, in wandering through Palestine, with the minute accuracy of the topographical notices of the sacred writers. Here is the sepulchre of Rachel, and there near us is Zelzah, retaining its ancient name, only in an Arabic form.



RACHEL'S TOMB—BETHLEHEM BEYOND.

The "Sepulchre of Rachel" is a modern building, a small dome surmounting a square chamber at one end, and nothing particular in form or material in any part of it. The tomb was probably a natural cave, and may be underneath. The identity of the site cannot be questioned. It is one of the few shrines which Muslims, Jews, and Christians agree in honoring, and about which their traditions are identical. There is much of simple pathos in the Bible narrative, which will be read on the spot, or even with a faithful picture before one, with new and fresh interest: "And they journeyed from Beth-el; and there was still some way to come to Ephrath...And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath (the same is Beth-lehem). And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave: the same is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." The pillar was still there when Moses wrote the narrative in the Book of Genesis. It has long since been swept away; but thirty centuries of sorrow and suffering have not been able to sweep away the memory of it from the hearts of Rachel's posterity.

The monument is there yet, retaining the name of the patriarch's beloved wife. Bethlehem is there beyond it, and the main features of the scene are there, as when Jacob passed on mourning. It is on the border too,

we are told, of the territory subsequently allotted to the tribe of Benjamin, the descendants of him whom his mother named, with her last breath, on this spot, Ben-oni, "Son of my sorrow."

Another touching incident is recalled by Rachel's Sepulchre. When Herod "slew all the male children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under...then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children." The territory of Benjamin adjoined Judah at Rachel's Sepulchre, and a section of the former was included in the massacre. Therefore, in the poetic imagery of the East, Rachel is represented as rising from her tomb and weeping over her slaughtered children.

The advisory board for Palestine Mandate currency selected the image of Rachel's Tomb as the motif for the 500 mil bank note as the site was revered by Jews, Arabs and Christians. The notes were printed in Hebrew, Arabic and English and were well received by the populace.



A POMEGRANATE BRANCH OR A PRIESTLY SCEPTER ON THE SHEKELS OF THE FIRST REVOLT?

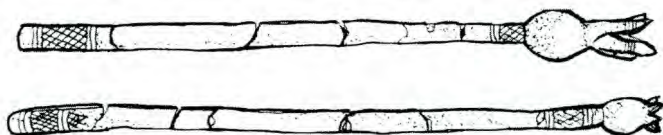
By Marvin Tameanko

I raised the question concerning the identity of the pomegranate branch on the famous shekels of the First Revolt in 1986 when archaeologists discovered a small ivory pomegranate that supposedly was used in King Solomon's temple during the mid 8th century BC. (See Seaby Coin and Medal Bulletin, July/August, 1986). The pomegranate is a partially broken, small artifact only about 1 3/4 inches by 3/4 of an inch (42.5 by 21 millimeters) in size. It is made of hippopotamus ivory and is inscribed around the shoulder with Paleo-Hebrew letters, (some missing), which say, "Belonging to the Tem(ple of the Lor)d, holy to the priests." It was suggested by historians that this pomegranate was part of a scepter carried by a priest during ceremonies in the Temple. In 1988 the Israel Museum purchased the artifact and in 2004, the pomegranate was given a thorough scientific examination. The Israel Exploration Journal (IEJ), Volume 55, No. 1, 2005, then reported the good and the bad news on pages 3-20. The good news is that the pomegranate itself is ancient dating to the time of Solomon's Temple. The bad news is that the inscription on the object is modern. Unfortunately, Israel has recently been plagued with many such ancient artifacts, like the coffin supposedly of Jesus's brother John, which have had inscriptions added by expert forgers to enhance their values. But the historical and numismatic importance of the pomegranate is only slightly diminished by the fake inscription.



**The ivory pomegranate in the Israel Museum, dating to the times of
the Temple of Solomon.**

In the eastern, ancient world, Pomegranates were often used as fertility symbols because they contained thousands of seeds. So from the earliest days, the images of pomegranates became favorite, religious symbols in Jewish history. The Bible mentions that images of these fruits were woven in blue, purple and scarlet as decorations into the hem of the vestments of the High Priest, Aaron, Exodus 28: 33-34, and carvings of pomegranates adorned the capitals of columns in the temple of Jerusalem, I Kings 7: 28, 20, 42. The ivory pomegranate now located in the Israel Museum had a hole drilled in its base to accept a shaft so it was probably used as a scepter tip. Several pomegranate topped, ivory scepters have been found in Israel, especially noteworthy were two, dating to the 13th century BC, found in excavations of the fortress of Lachish in 1930. These scepters are 9 1/2 inches long and are tipped with an ivory pomegranate, very similar to the Israel Museum specimen.



Two ivory, pomegranate scepters, dated to the 13th century BC, found in Lachish in 1930. See Biblical Archaeological Review (BAR) Vol. X, no. 1, Jan./Feb.1984, page 29.

When I first saw the ivory pomegranate in the museum, I was puzzled by the fact that someone would bother to inscribe so small an item, especially with a mundane 'ownership' statement. A donor's name I could have understood as appropriate for such an artifact, and an inscription on the more suitable length of the scepter shaft seemed more logical. Also, when seeing the pomegranate, which is actually the small bud of the young fruit still showing the flower's petals, I was reminded of the image of the three pomegranates on the shekel struck during the First Revolt of the Jews against the Romans in AD 66-70. These images are sometimes described by numismatists as pomegranates in their transitional stage from blossom to fruit. The reverse of this famous shekel actually depicts three pomegranates on a branch arranged as a symmetrical, trident-like form. When these coins were first discovered, the branch and fruit depicted were not recognized as the pomegranate plant. This problem was mentioned by Ya'akov Meshorer, the dean of Jewish numismatics, in his 1967 book, 'Jewish Coins of the Second temple Period', page 90. In later years, and certainly with the discovery of the ivory artifact now in the Israel Museum, all

numismatists agreed that the fruits depicted on the shekel were indeed the young fruit of the pomegranate, but stylistically depicted, as had been suggested by the eminent numismatist Dr. Leo Kadman from the very beginning.

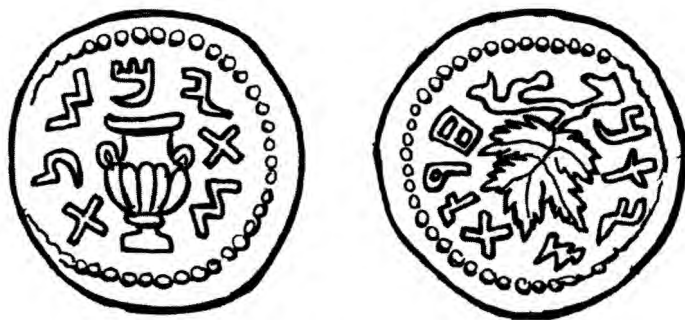


The famous shekel of the First Revolt of the Jews, AD 66-70, this one struck in Shin Aleph, year 1, or AD 66, showing the three pomegranates buds on a branch on the reverse. A chalice used in the Temple ceremonies is depicted on the obverse. Ancient Jewish Coinage, Vol. 2, by Y. Meshorer, cited hereafter as Meshorer, 3.



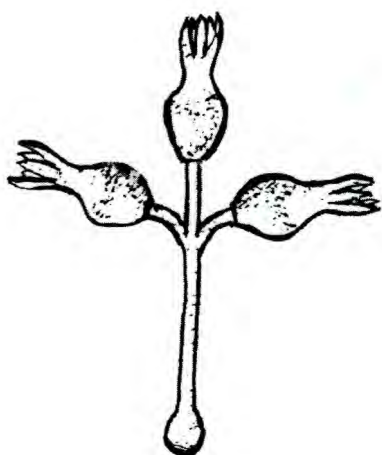
A sketch drawing of the typical pomegranate bush found in the Middle East.

The discovery of the ivory pomegranate stimulated some speculation about the design of the three pomegranates on the shekel. The symmetrical shape shown on the coin is far too rigid and unnatural for a plant form and no leaves are shown on the branch which is unusual in such compositions. Most of the coins struck during the First Revolt are very impressive because they depict plant forms in a very real, naturalistic manner, and the species are easily recognized. For example, a bronze coin of the First Revolt shows a vine leaf and branch with a tendril, in a most realistic composition. The three pomegranates on the shekels of the First Revolt, on the other hand, appear as almost abstract shapes in an arrangement unrelated to nature.



A bronze coin, 17 millimeters in diameter, showing a vine leaf and tendril on the reverse. This coin was struck in AD 67. Meshorer 153a.

Furthermore, the branch with the three pomegranates on the coins is terminated at the bottom with an unusually large pellet. Engravers often drilled a dot in the dies at terminal points of an inscribed line so that their scribing tool could use them as the positive beginning and ending of the line, but they were small dots and some can actually be seen at the ends of the pomegranate petals on these coins. The dot at the bottom of the branch however, is excessive and looks more like a 'pommel' or the ball end of a handle. A pommel at the end of a rod provides for a more comfortable grip and keeps the hand from slipping when it is used. Also, if the shaft is made of cast metal, a pommel shape can be created by the recess in the mold into which the molten metal is poured. If this was what was intended, perhaps the three pomegranates on a shaft represented an ivory tipped metal scepter used in the Temple's rituals. A scepter made of cast precious metal, topped with three ivory, pomegranate shaped finials would be an impressive implement, suitable for use by the High Priest because three was a significant and magical number in Jewish folklore. As well, the three fruits may have represented the three sacred festivals when the Israelites made pilgrimages to the Temple. Also, the Mishna, Sukk 5.5, suggests that the number three indicates a substantial quantity and signifies a change of status or definition. As for the number three being magical, in the Talmud, Shabbath 64a, it is recorded that to make a magic charm, "a poor man plaits three threads of (goat's) hair and suspends it from his daughter's neck." Moreover, the absence of leaves, and the rigid, formalized, straight-line shape employed for the branch, suggests a man-made object, like a scepter, rather than a meandering, organic, plant form. With all these facts and conjectures, one could conclude that the branch on the shekels does indeed represent a scepter made of metal and tipped with ivory pomegranates.



A conjectural gold or silver scepter with three ivory, pomegranate finials. This may be the artifact depicted on the shekel of the First Revolt. As a religious implement, it could have been used in conjunction with the chalice shown on the obverse of the same coin.

If such a priestly scepter existed it may have been used to bless the congregation in the courts of the Temple during high holidays. Such a blessing would have granted the things symbolized by the pomegranate, Fruitfulness, Abundance and Sanctity, three of the qualities of life so desirable in ancient Jewish Society. And this is why a triple-headed scepter would be engraved on the shekel of the First Revolt of the Jews against the Romans, a coin at that time closely related to the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Half-Shekel Purim Coin (1961-1962)

By: Shmuel Aviezer

In July 1960, the Committee for Planning Banknotes and Coins, adjoined to the Governor of the Bank of Israel, recommended that the Bank issue a coin that carries the words "half lira", to be released on the occasion of the Feast of Purim.

It is to be remembered that during the period of the First Temple (up to 586 B.C.) every adult of twenty-years and older had to donate a half-shekel as a personal ransom to be dedicated to the upkeep of the Temple.

Later, the half-shekel became an essential yearly tax for adults, which was levied in the first two weeks of the month of Adar (February-March).

After the destruction of the Second temple the Jews everywhere continued to donate the half-shekel, the payment being collected by the Synagogues' treasurers and transferred to the Holyland to support Yeshivos and poor Torah students.

According to another custom, the contribution of half-shekel in Purim came to atone for the 10,000 talents of silver promised by Haman to the King's treasury (as in Esther 3:9): "If it please the King, let it be written that they may be destroyed : and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the King's treasuries."

Presumably, Haman had considered that the properties and assets of the intended-to-be-killed Jews will yield a substantial amount of wealth, which should meaningfully enrich the treasury of the King.

Along the years, Jews in the Diaspora used their country's coin, of "half", for the purpose of Purim donations; also as a token of atonement on Yom Kippur's eve.



In the absence of an Israeli coin, depicting a "half", and in order to provide the donors, especially the religious ones, with a coin that would serve the purpose of the half-shekel tradition, the issue of a "half-lira" denomination seemed appropriate.

On summing up the deliberations on the subject at the above-mentioned Committee and in the Currency Department of the Bank of Israel, it was decided to issue this coin as a commemorative one. With this specialty bestowed on the coin, it was offered to the public in double its face value (i.e. one lira).

The motif chosen was the replica of a Jewish coin of the third year of the Jewish War against Rome (68 C.E.). It depicts a chalice, above which two Hebrew letters marking "year 3" of the Revolt surrounded by the words "half-shekel" in old Hebrew letterings.

The graphic artists Rothschild and Lippman designed the coin. The Committee prescribed that the replica of the ancient coin keep its original size of about 20 mm, to fill the obverse of the new coin.

The date of issue was 1961. Because of the encouraging demand of the coin, a 1962 edition was released a year later bearing the same design.

Both coins were minted at the Dutch mint in Utrecht.

The issue of this coin was discontinued after a circulation coin of the same metal composition and denomination, namely, Israeli lira 1/2, was issued in 1963.

Biblical Verses on Israeli Medals

"Turn it and turn it again for everything is in it", thus the sages said: (i.e. it is an inexhaustible mine of information).

True. For every creation in our world it is possible to single out a verse from our scriptures that would magically conform to it as if especially commissioned.

We table here a pick of verses imprinted on medals issued along the years by the Israel Government Coins and Medals Corporation. Look how they hit the target and how those who had cleverly chosen them deserve all the praise.

<u>Medal Theme</u>	<u>Verse</u>
1) Valour – Tenth Anniversary of Israel – 1958	"Peace be written thy walls" (Psalms 122:7) "For the builders, everyone has his sword girded by his side" (Nehemia 4:18) (Reverse)

- 2) Second Bible Contest 1961 "How I love thy law"
(Psalms 119:97)
- 3) Shavit Meteorological Rocket – 1962 "There shall come a star out of Jacob" (Numbers 24:17)
- 4) Immigrant Blockade Runners – 1964 "Ye dared to go up"
(Deuteronomy 1:41)
- 5) Sinai Campaign – 1966 "And all her paths are peace"
(Proverbs 3:17)
- 6) The Jewish Agency – 1979 "And I will bring them in ... and they will be my people"
(Zecharia 8:8)
- 7) Israel Railways – 1979 "Make straight in the desert a highway" (Isaiah 40:3)
- 8) 100 years of settlement - 1882 - 1982 "And I will plant them upon their land" (Amos 9:15) (obverse)
"And dwell in your land safely"
(Leviticus 26:5) (reverse)
- 9) The Jewish Education in the Diaspora – 1983 "And they went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people" (I Chronicles 17:9)
- 10) Volunteers – 1983 "With a perfect heart they volunteered" (I Chronicles 29:9)
- 11) Blessed by the Healer - 1984 "And thine health shall spring fourth speedily" (Isaiah 58:8)
- 12) Sir Moses Montefiore - 1984 "For it is time to favour her, for the set time is come" (Psalms 102:13)
- 13) Archeology – 1984 "Truth will spring out of the earth" (Psalms 85:11)
- 14) Mount Tabor – 1986 "Awake, awake Debora"
(Judges 5:12)
- 15) Aviation – 1986 "They lifted their wings and rose from the ground (Ezekiel 10:16)
- 16) The "voice of Israel" Jubilee – 1986 "You heard the voice of the words but saw no form; only a voice"
(Deuteronomy 4:12)
- 17) Jubilee of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra - 1987 "With harp and lyre, drums and dance triumphant cymbals, Halleluyah" (Psalms 150)
- 18) Hadassah 75th Anniversary - 1987 "The healing of the daughter of my people" (Jeremiah 8:22)

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 19) | Mother and wife – 1987 | “But thou excellest them all”
(Proverbs 31:29) |
| 20) | Tomb of Rachel – 1990 | “Shall your sons return to their own
land” (Jeremiah 31:17) |
| 21) | Ingathering of Exiles – 1990 | “And gather you from everyland”
(Ezakiel36:“I will plant them on their
own land” (Amos 9:15) |
| 22) | 25 years for United
Jerusalem – 1995 | “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem”
(Psalms 122:6)“Jerusalem is builded
as a city that is compact together”
(Psalms 122:3) |
| 23) | 500 – the New World –
1992 | “Trough the paths of the seas”
(Psalms 8:8) |
| 24) | Shavuot (Pentecost) – 1993 | “And the feast of harvest, the first
fruits of thy labours” (Exodus 23:17) |
| 25) | 3000 years for Jerusalem | “They called it the city of David”
(I Chronicles11:7) |
| 26) | Zim – 50 years
(Israel Navigation Co.) | “Like the merchant ships ... from
afar” (Proverbs 31:14) |
| 27) | 50 years Anniversary of
Israel – 1998 | “Jubilee for you”
(Leviticus 25:10) |
| 28) | 25th Anniversary Operation
Yonathan – 2001 | “The bow of Yonathan turned not
back” (II Samuel 1:22) |
| 29) | Ilan Ramon and Columbia
Space Shuttle – 2003 | “They were swifter than eagles”
(II Samuel 1:23) |
| 30) | 30th anniversary of the Yom
Kippor War – 2003 | “that Israel prevailed”
(Exodus 17:11) |
| 31) | Ben Gurion International
Airport – Terminal 3 – 2004 | “The skies are yours, the earth
also” (Psalms 89:11) |

In my opinion, the most thrilling verse is the one inscribed on the medal commemorating the Entebbe campaign of 1976, when Israelis, who had been hijacked to the airport of Entebbe in Uganda, were pulled out from their enforced captivity by an Israeli daring airlift. This verse fits as if having been commissioned in King David Psalms to be plucked at the appropriate occasion. Remember the unconceivable situation in which everyone was caught, rising his eyes to the sky praying and asking “from whence cometh my help” (Psalms 121:1) and suddenly his prayers are answered in the most dramatic way, “He sent from above and took me!” (Psalms 18:16).

WAS PRESIDENT LINCOLN JEWISH?

Did we actually already have a Jewish President??? On the twelfth of February, 1809 nearly 200 years ago - a young, poor illiterate woman from Virginia, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, gave birth to a son in a log cabin built along the banks of the south fork of Nolin Creek, near what is now Hodgenville, Kentucky. That baby, whom she named Abraham, grew to become of our greatest, and most tragic, national leaders. Lincoln was a man of great spiritual conviction. Yet, and I find this fact fascinatingly instructive, Abraham Lincoln was the only American president not to have declared himself a member of any particular religious faith.

That fact has given rise to a great deal of interesting speculation. In fact, there are those who believe that Honest Abe was Jewish. After all, his name was Abraham. His great-grandfather was named Mordechai. Lincoln was the only President not to have a formal religious affiliation. He was neither raised in a church nor did he ever belong to a church. And there's more...

The town of Lincoln, in eastern England, whence his ancestors came, has an interesting Jewish history. A Jewish community was established there in 1159. During Crusader riots, the Sheriff of Lincoln saved the Jews by giving them official protection. St. Hugh, the great Bishop of Lincoln, taught love of Jews to his parishioners. His death was marked by an official period of mourning among Lincoln's Jews. Rabbi Joseph of Lincoln was a scholar mentioned in the Talmud. Aaron of Lincoln was a financier whose operations extended all over the country.

In 1255, Lincoln's Jews were accused of ritual murder. Ninety-one Lincoln Jews were sent to London for trial and 18 were executed. Several Popes and Christian leaders as early as the thirteenth century denounced the blood libels as nonsense and forbade Christians to accuse Jews of ritual murder, but it made little difference for there was another motive involve - money.

The profession of money lending was forbidden by the Christian church, but it was one of the few occupations they permitted Jews to follow and many people owed money to the Jews, including the authorities of Lincoln Cathedral. At that time all Jews were *servi camerae* (chattels of the king) so any money owed to them was technically owed to the throne. But King Henry III, desperate for money had sold his rights over the Jews to the Duke of Cornwall. The only way he could get his hands on their money was to have them convicted of a capital offence because the property of anyone executed was forfeit to the king. It is no

coincidence that those hanged were among the wealthiest Jews in England. It also suited local people to accuse the Jews since it gave them the opportunity to ransack their houses and destroy the records of debt. Notwithstanding, the Lincoln Jewish community flourished until 1290, when they were forcibly expelled by edict.

Most Jewish historians assume that all the Jews of Lincoln left in 1290. But could it be possible that some remained, practicing their Judaism in secret... passing the family secret from generation to generation? The more we learn of the secret life of Spanish Jewry following the Expulsion of 1492, the more we must at least consider the possibility of the same thing occurring elsewhere.

When President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated, whole Jewish communities sat *shivah*. Rabbis all over the country eulogized the fallen President. Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the man who created Reform Judaism in this country, began his eulogy with the words...

"Brethern, the lamented Abraham Lincoln believed himself to be bone from our bone and flesh from our flesh. He supposed himself to be a descendant of Hebrew parentage. He said so in my presence."

Lincoln was often questioned about his religious beliefs. Time and again, he told of a special passage from Scripture that summed up his theology. It was the twentieth chapter of the Book of Exodus he recommended that every American study, learn and follow. In English it is usually referred to as the Ten Commandments.

Rabbi Jeff Kahn Temple Har Shalom, Warren, N.J.:



Egyptian Jewish History

"Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated four hundred years."--

Genesis 15:13

The Jewish community of Egypt is old, damaged and dying. Once a thriving population of several million Israelites, the Egyptian Jewish community has dwindled to several hundred Jews, most of them elderly and infirm. This is a sad end to a glorious tradition of Egyptian Jewry which stretches back three millennia to Biblical times when Israelite tribes first moved to the Land of Goshen during the reign of the Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (1375-1358 B.C.).

The Bible tells the story of Ramses II (1298-1232 B.C.), his enslavement of Jews and their subsequent revolt and Exodus across the Sinai desert to Canaan. Jewish traders traveled back and forth across the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt for centuries thereafter, often using Egypt as an escape route to flee invading armies like those of the Assyrians, the Babylonians and the Romans. Often these Jews failed to return to Palestine, remaining in Egypt to found Jewish communities in cities like Cairo and Alexandria.

A substantial Jewish spiritual community developed in the 5th century B.C. at Elephantine, a powerful military port from which the Egyptians fought Babylonian expansion, around a controversial Temple which mixed Jewish ritual with the worship of Egyptian gods; local marauders destroyed it in 410 B.C. In the time of Ptolemy Jews comprised almost a quarter of the population of Alexandria and remained a substantial force in the Egyptian community for more than a millennium in the face of increasing Muslim persecution.

Modest in appearance, delightful in interior and boasting of legends, the Ben Ezra synagogue is the supreme Jewish monument in Cairo. It is not the only synagogue, but it is the most used. It no longer has a rabbi, but is maintained by 42 local Jewish families. Legends claim that the synagogue is built on the spot where pharaoh's daughter found Moses in the bulrushes and where Jeremiah spoke to survivors after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Until the 9th century, there was a church here. The Jewish community bought it from the Christians, who needed the money to pay taxes to Ibn Tulun to construct his famous mosque. It is possible that the

church building survived into the synagogue. The modest exterior is perhaps not a bad idea considering the shifting attitudes from the rulers and the population of Egypt towards Jews. It was severely damaged in 1967 following the Six Day War.

But the most important recent event is the finding of medieval manuscripts in 1894. The collection, called Geniza, contained manuscripts with references to God, and therefore could not be destroyed, counted more than 250,000 pages, dating to the period between 1002 and 1266.

At the turn of the 20th century there were more than 25,000 Jews in Egypt, mainly concentrated in Cairo and Alexandria. This population had tripled by 1945, when the rise of Egyptian nationalism led to anti-Jewish riots that killed Jews and laid waste to a synagogue, a Jewish hospital, and an old-age home. A substantial number of Jews fled further anti-Jewish riots in the late '40s and early '50s, most racing across the Sinai for the relative safety of Israel. Emigration increased in direct proportion with the escalation of Egyptian-Israeli tensions. By 1957 only 15,000 Jews remained in Egypt; after the 1967 Six-Day War there were less than 2,500.

The Jewish population dwindled further in the 1970s, leaving only a handful of Jews in the major Egyptian cities. The community may have disappeared altogether had President Anwar Sadat not signed the Camp David Accords with Israel in 1979 and allowed Egyptian Jews to once again establish ties with world Jewry. Relations between Jews and Arabs in Egypt since the peace have been tense but the Egyptian government has protected the Jews' right to maintain their faith.

Most of the hundred or so Jews who remain in Egypt live in Cairo, though a handful remain in Alexandria. Most of them are elderly; there is no rising generation to replace them.

The fourteenth in the series of Hanukka coins was issued in conjunction with the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt on March 6, 1979. The Hanukka lamp which appears as the motif on the coin was made in Egypt in the 19th century. It is shown on the reverse of the coin within a shallow depression in the form of a Star of David. Below in Hebrew "A Hanukka lamp from Egypt, 19th century."



The First Medal of the Holocaust

1943-1944

By Severin Szperling

The author of this medal Jozef Goslawski (1908-1963) was a distinguished Polish artist, medalist and sculptor who received 30 rewards. In 1939 he graduated from the Royal Art Academy in Rome. In the same year he returned to Poland. In the beginning of the German occupation of Poland he settled in a village near Majdanek where he started his art work. Emotional over the tragedies occurring in the Majdanek Concentration and Extermination Camp, in 1943 he began to carve the medal "MAJDANEK" and finished it in 1944.

His wife Wanda wrote (translation from Polish):

"... ..in 1943 during the engraving of the medal "Majdanek", a German SS-man came to his house in search of something. Very quickly my husband hid the medal "Majdanek" under a religious sculpture. The very dusty and sweaty SS-man waved his hand with disregard at his art work and left the house."

Obverse: Around the edge (translation from Polish): AS A DOCUMENT OF HISTORY TO SHAME THE GERMAN NATION FOREVER. In the center: 1941 MAJDANEK 1944

Reverse: Nazi German swastika in the form of an octopus, which is shown choking human bodies in atrocious pain.

The medal MAJDANEK was made only in 10 pieces, cast in bronze, diameter 80 mm,

Signed on reverse: Jozef Goslawski 1944. One medal is possessed by the family Goslawski. The second piece is in the National Museum In Warsaw, the third is in the National Museum. of Cracow, Poland, the fourth. Is In Museum of Majdanek Concentration Camp, the fifth in the Museum of the Medallie Art In Wroclaw, Poland, and the sixth one is in my collection. The whereabouts of the last 4 pieces are unknown. Jozef Goslawski did not know in these tragic days of German occupation that the medal he created for all the people imprisoned at the death camp, which were mostly Jews would become the first medal commemorating the tragedies that occurred in the Majdanek Concentration and Extermination Camp. This medal "MAJDANEK" is the first Holocaust medal in the history of the Shoah.

THE FIRST MEDAL OF THE HOLOCAUST
1943 – 1944



JEWISH HISTORY IN SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO

The first written records of the presence of Jews in Belgrade date back to the 16th century when the city was under Ottoman rule. At that time Belgrade boasted a strong Jewish Ladino speaking Sephardic community mostly settled in the central Belgrade neighborhood called Dorćol. The city's Ashkenazi Jews, many of them from Central Europe and nearby Austria-Hungary, mostly lived near the Sava river in the area where the current active synagogue stands.

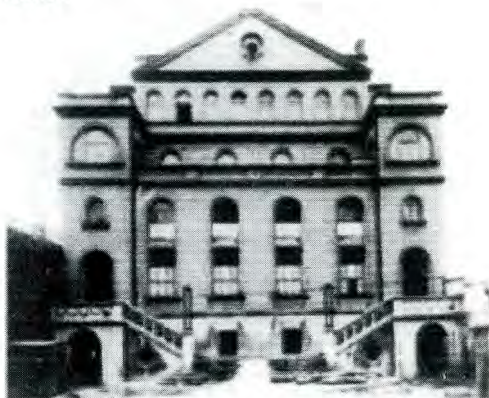
The Jewish community in Belgrade flourished most notably in the 17th century when Belgrade had a yeshiva (a Jewish religious school), numerous community and cultural centers, Jewish charitable organizations, societies and shops. A beautiful 17th century Sephardic synagogue, then one of the most prominent buildings in the city, stood in today's Cara Uroša Street complete with ritual bathing quarters.

Before World War II some 10,000 Jews lived in Belgrade, 80% of whom were Spanish or Ladino speaking Sephardim, and 20% Yiddish speaking Ashkenazim. Most of Serbia's and Belgrade's Jewry was destroyed in World War II by the German occupation forces. There were three concentration camps for Jews, Gypsies and Serbs in the city at the time. Most Jewish men perished at the *Autokomanda* site near the city centre, apart from those killed at the *Banjica* camp; the camp at *Sajmište* mostly saw the destruction of women and children. Wartime bombing destroyed most of the Jewish monuments as well as much of the city.

The Belgrade Synagogue (*Beogradska sinagoga*) is currently the only active Jewish place of worship in Serbia and Montenegro. It is located in the center of Belgrade. On June 15, 1924 there was a solemn ceremony for the laying of the cornerstone, within which, a charter containing texts in Hebrew and Serbian was sealed. The charter was signed by King Alexander and Queen Maria of Yugoslavia. The general construction was finished by November 1, 1925, and once the interior had been completed, the building was finally opened in the summer of 1926, and consecrated by Rabbi Šlang.

The synagogue was built on land bought from the city by the Society of Ashkenazi Jews of Belgrade. According to official plans the building was to house the synagogue, ritual baths, a school, community offices and apartments for the community employees. There had been an older Ashkenazi synagogue in the vicinity of the present one since the 19th century, but it was torn down to make way for new urban development.

The synagogue is known in Belgrade as the "*Kosmajaska Temple*", as its address before World War II was Kosmajaska Street. The name of the street has since been changed to Maršala Birjuzova Street. Traditionally this synagogue followed the Ashkenazi rite and served a congregation of Belgrade Jews who spoke Yiddish. Today, however, it serves the small, mostly Sephardic, Jewish community remaining in the city following the Holocaust. There are regular services on Saturday evenings and Jewish holidays. The rabbi serving this synagogue is the head rabbi of Serbia and Montenegro, Isak Asiel.



Housed in the same building there is a community center for Jewish youth as well as rooms for occasional community functions and meetings. A Jewish kindergarten has recently been opened at the building as well. For many years now, the building also houses several families affiliated in some way with the local Jewish community.

The architectural style is late neo-classical (usually classified as academic style in this part of Europe), with an enclosed courtyard to the front. The building is graced with a large central staircase which dominates its façade together with the four grand windows of the synagogue chambers, as seen in the picture. The gable façade has a prominent round window at its centre bearing the Star of David.

The interior was partially renovated in 1990, and the city authorities have announced a general restoration program for the near future. There is one other surviving synagogue building in the Belgrade area: in Zemun. Built in 1850, it is not in use today, although it is still recognizably a Jewish place of worship. According to some reports the current synagogue was used by the occupying forces as a brothel. The building was re-consecrated after the war. Since 1944 there has only been a very small Jewish community in Serbia and Belgrade.

Belgrade currently has a very active Jewish community center housing the Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia and Montenegro and the Jewish Historical Museum. The city also has several commemorative monuments to Jewish suffering in past wars, the newest of which was unveiled at Autokomanda, near the site of the mass killing of Jews during WWII. There are Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewish cemeteries in Belgrade, but only the Sephardic one is in regular use today.



One of the historic Sephardic synagogues of Belgrade

The numismatic illustration is a 10 Perpera banknote of Montenegro which circulated during the time that the Belgrade Synagogue was concentrated.



DIAMOND TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Jews have been prominent in the trade and in working of precious stones, of which diamonds and pearls provided the bulk, from the Middle Ages to the modern era. They took an active part in opening up the diamond markets of India and Brazil, the resources of South Africa, the London diamond market, and the diamond industries of the Low Countries. Because the diamond trade routes corresponded with the links between Jewish centers in the Diaspora—in the Ottoman Empire, the Netherlands, in some of the cities of northwest Germany, and in Poland-Lithuania in the 16th to 18th centuries—the trade was particularly suited to Jewish enterprise.

With the rise of Amsterdam as a major center of the European diamond trade and industry, Dutch Jews, mostly members of the Portuguese Sephardi community who had been prominent in Portugal's diamond trade, played an important part in the industry.

Jewish enterprise had a large share in the development of the South African diamond mines, which became the chief source of diamond supply after 1870. German Jews were among the earliest pioneers of the South African diamond rush. Among the prospectors were many from London's East End, one of whom, Barney Barnato, was a formidable rival and later partner of Cecil Rhodes. Alfred Beit was the architect of the De Beers syndicate which S. B. Joel first headed. Ernest Oppenheimer and Harry Oppenheimer successfully followed in his footsteps.

The start of Fascism in Europe created a crisis for Jews engaged in the diamond industry and trades. The Nazi occupation authorities in Belgium and Holland made Jewish diamond merchants and industrialists their particular victims. During World War II diamond-cutting centers were established in Erez Israel and the United States by Jewish refugees. Israel.

A diamond industry was founded in Palestine before World War II by immigrants from the Low Countries, who brought with them the necessary technical skills and commercial connections. During World War II Palestine replaced Belgium and the Netherlands as the gem diamond center of the free world. Palestine received its supplies of rough diamonds from the De Beers central selling organization and sold its polished products mainly to the U.S. At its peak during this period, the industry employed some four thousand polishers, mainly in Netanyah. The value of the diamond exports reached some \$ 16,000,000 a year.

The revival of the centers in Belgium and the Netherlands after the war, the diversion of raw material by the Syndicate to these countries, and the Israel War of Independence drastically contracted the diamond-cutting industry in Israel. By 1949 it was almost at a standstill. However, the industry revived in 1950 and, in the early 1960s, became the second largest diamond gem center in the world, after Belgium. Its share of the world trade in polished diamonds is between a quarter and a third, and it maintains the same proportion in the numbers of polishers employed.

The secure and steady supply of rough diamonds was a constant concern of the industry. The De Beers Syndicate directly controls the distribution of over 80% of the world output of rough diamonds. Between 1950 and 1959 its direct sales to Israel were frozen at approximately \$7,000,000 a year. The industry had therefore to obtain its supplies from other sources, the proportion of which in the total import rose from 24% in 1950 to 84% in 1959. At the end of this period the special high premium of the indirect supplies was so severe that it endangered the prospects for further development.

Israel agencies, among them Pittu'ah Development, a company whose shares are owned by the Israel Government, were encouraged to exploit firsthand sources of supply in western Africa. Negotiations were conducted with the Syndicate with a view to assuring the industry in Israel an adequate share of the diamonds under the Syndicate's control. As a result, from 1961, the proportion of the supply from the Syndicate rose and gradually constituted more than half of the imports.

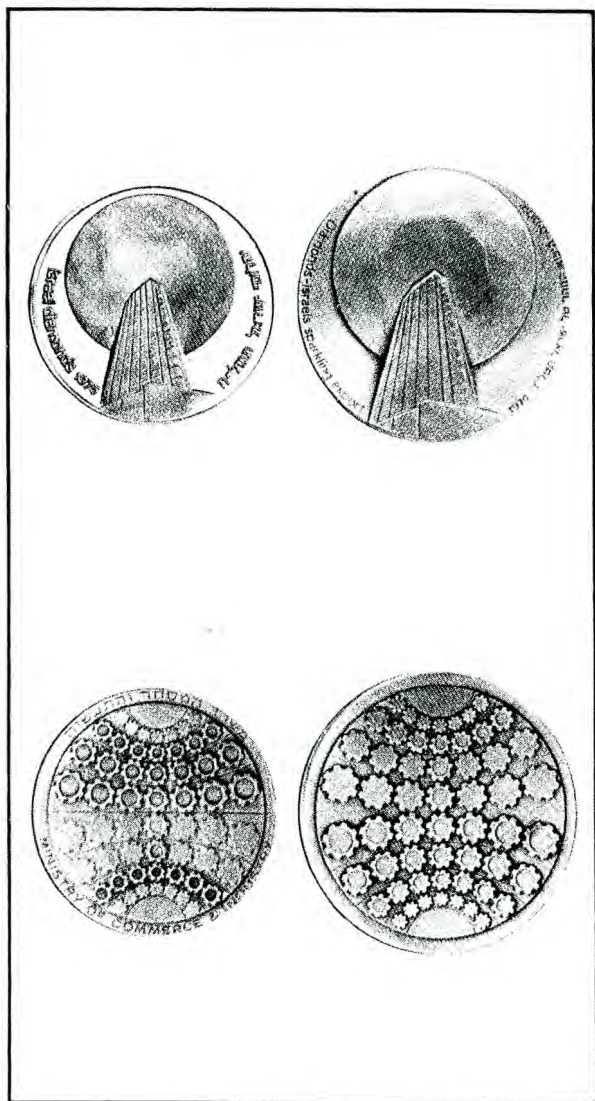
The Israel diamond industry concentrates on the cutting of melee stones, medium-sized octahedron-shaped rough stones, which are sawed in the middle. The two pyramid shaped parts are then polished by a chain of six polishers, each specializing in particular facets, to produce a round "brilliant" with 57 facets, suitable for setting. Some stones with particular shapes are cut into "fancies", such as marquises and baguettes, etc.

The industry consists of some 400 enterprises, about half of which employ less than 15 workers. Only 45 enterprises have more than 50 workers and only three more than 100 workers. Over half of the enterprises, and of the workers, are located in and around Tel Aviv where the Diamond Exchange is also located, over a quarter in Netanyah, and the rest in Jerusalem and the development areas.

In 1974, the State of Israel issued the Diamond Official Award medal. It commemorates the Diamond Exchange Building in Ramat Gan, a suburb of Tel-Aviv and the Diamond Export Industry which has become the largest of its kind in the world.

The obverse shows a diamond shaped geometric figure and the Diamond Exchange Building in Ramat Gan. The inscription in Hebrew and English reads "Diamonds - Israel's Sparkling Export." The reverse shows a seven branched candelabra entwined with the wheels of industry around the world, an expression of Israel's import and export. Around the rim on the silver and gold editions is an inscription in Hebrew and English "Ministry of Commerce and Industry". Some of the medals have a tiny diamond inset.

The medals were issued in 59mm bronze, 45mm silver/.935 and 59mm silver/.935. The 59mm silver was not offered for sale to the public but were reserved for the Diamond industry. In 1975 the 35mm gold/916.6 was issued.



THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN KOSICE (KOSHITZA / KASCHAU), 1927

Judaica Kosice or the renowned "Kassa" community was located in Eastern Slovakia, today Slovak Republic. In the beginning of the 20th century the Jewish community divided into two separate communities; one Orthodox and the other Neolog. In 1927 each community established their own separate synagogue. The illustrated share certificate was issued in that year 1927, by this community, in two languages, Slovakian and Hungarian. One half of the leaf contains the certificate and the second half includes all original 12 coupons, with the signatures of the leader of the community. The entire certificate is decorated with about 100 miniature "Magen David" emblems. At the top of the certificate there is an illustration of a farmer plowing his field with a team of horses. On lower part of the certificate there is an illustration with German text regarding the "Jewish loan society" with additional emblems.



The tragedy of the Kosice City Jews is tragedy of Slovakia and Hungary as well. Kosice City belonged to Hungary during WWII. Kosice City came under Hungarian control after the Vienna Arbitration on November 2, 1938. The Hungarian Army occupied the city on November 10, 1938. During Census in occupied South Slovakian territory, there were 11,420 inhabitants of Jewish faith or ancestry in Kosice City. It was the largest population of Jews in occupied South Slovakia.

When the Germans took over Hungary on March 19, 1944, the pace for the extermination of the Jewish community from Kosice City was stepped up. Prime Minister Demeter Stojay of the Hungarian government decided about final liquidation of Jews already on March 29, 1944.

Starting on April 5, 1944 various restriction orders were issued. According to these orders Jews were obliged to wear a badge with a yellow "Star of David", displayed visibly on their clothing. They were no longer allowed to use public transportation, visit theaters, movies, coffee houses, or public spas. They had to record all their property with city authorities. There was a curfew for Jews from 7 PM to 6 AM. Their businesses and workshops were closed and confiscated and they were ordered to hand over their radio receivers.

With presence of the State Secretary of the Ministry of Interior L. Endre, on April 24, 1944 a concentration camp was established in the Kosice City brick factory. According to Kosice City Police District order dated April 24, 1944 Jews were assembled in today's Puskin Street, Zvonarska Street, and Gresakova Street synagogues. From these they were escorted into the brick factory concentration camp. In two camps at the brick factory they crowded 10 590 Jews.

Other groups of the Jewish community were located in the city ghetto, the city prison, and in a few other places. On April 20, 1944 there were total 13,250 Jews in Kosice City. This number shows there were an additional 3000 Jewish persons, coming from places other than Kosice City. The Jewish ghetto was a strictly isolated part of city suburb and it was place of residence for Jews with some temporary exclusion. At this time the ghetto consisted of the streets in the southeast of the city. Inside the ghetto streets, which were closed by fences, Jews could not loiter or assemble on the streets.

Similarly to the Jews from the brick factory, ghetto inhabitants had to work downtown and return immediately. During the return trip they were subjected to humiliating personal body searches. Jews who were in the ghetto believed they had a little more hope to survive because they had relatively more freedom and generally better hygienic conditions for life.

Deportation of Jews started on May 16, 1944. They were transported by railway freight cars. Railroad track leading directly into the brick factory allowed loading of freight cars in the brick factory. In four trainloads all concentrated Jews were sent to Oswiencim in Poland and the last trainload took place on June 4, 1944. About 12,000 Kosice City Jews perished in the gas chambers of Oswiencim. Once a sizable portion of the entire city population, only a fragment of the Jewish community returned to Kosice City after the war.

Janusz Korczak

Janusz Korczak, real name **Henryk Goldszmit** (July 22, 1878 or 1879 – August, 1942) was a Polish-Jewish pediatrician, children's author and child pedagogist, known as *Old Doctor* (*Stary Doktor*). Korczak was born in Warsaw in an assimilated Jewish family. His father Józef Goldszmit died in 1896, possibly by his own hand, leaving the family without a source of income. Over the next few years, the family was forced to abandon their spacious apartment and, during his teens, Korczak was the sole breadwinner for his mother, sister, and grandmother.

In 1898 he used *Janusz Korczak* as a writing pseudonym in Ignacy Paderewski's literary contest. The name originated from the book *Janusz Korczak and the pretty Sword sweeper lady* by Józef Ignacy Kraszewski. In years 1898–1904 Korczak studied medicine in Warsaw and also wrote for several Polish language newspapers. After his graduation he became a pediatrician. During the Russo-Japanese War in 1905–1906 he served as a military doctor. Meanwhile his book *Child of the Drawing Room* gained him some literary recognition. After the war he continued his practice in Warsaw.

In years 1907–1908 Korczak continued his studies in Berlin. When he was working for Orphan's Society in 1909 he met Stefania Wilczyńska. In 1911–1912 he became a director of *Dom Sierot*, the orphanage of his own design for Jewish children in Warsaw. He took Wilczyńska as his closest associate. There he formed a kind-of-a-republic for children with its own small parliament, court and newspaper. He reduced his other duties as a doctor.

During 1914 Korczak again became a military doctor with the rank of lieutenant during the World War I. He wrote his pedagogic essays in his spare time. In Kyiv he also met Maryna Falska, who later became his aide in Warsaw. He returned to Warsaw prior to the regaining of independence by Poland in 1918.

After the war he resumed his job in *Dom Sierot* and also founded another orphanage called *Nasz dom* (*Our Home*). During the Polish-Soviet War he served again as a military doctor with the rank of major but was assigned to Warsaw after a brief stint in Łódź. He contracted typhus and his mother died of it.

In 1926 he let children begin their own newspaper, the *Mały Przegląd*, as a weekly attachment to the daily Polish-Jewish Newspaper *Nasz Przegląd*. During the 1930s he had his own radio program until it was cancelled due to complaints of anti-semites. He was awarded the Silver

Cross of the Polonia Restituta in 1933. During 1934–1936 Korczak traveled yearly to Palestine and visited its kibbutzes. That led to increasing anti-semitic attacks in Polish press. That also led to a break with the non-Jewish orphanage he had been working for. Still he refused to move to Palestine even when Wilczyńska moved there for a year in 1938.

When the World War II erupted, Korczak volunteered for duty in the Polish Army but was refused due to his age. He witnessed the Wehrmacht taking over Warsaw. When the Nazis created a Warsaw Ghetto in 1940, his orphanage was forced to move to the ghetto. And Korczak moved in with them.

On August 5 (some say August 6), 1942, German soldiers came to collect the 192 (there is some debate about the actual number and it may have been 196) orphans and about one dozen staff members to take them to Treblinka extermination camp. Korczak had been offered sanctuary on the “Aryan side” of Warsaw but turned it down repeatedly, saying that he could not abandon his children. Now too, he refused offers of sanctuary, insisting that he would go with the children. The children were dressed in their best clothes, and each carried a blue knapsack and a favorite book or toy. Joshua Perle, an eyewitness, described the procession of Korczak and the children through the ghetto to the *Umschlagplatz* (deportation point to the death camps):

... A miracle occurred. Two hundred children did not cry out. Two hundred pure souls, condemned to death, did not weep. Not one of them ran away. None tried to hide. Like stricken swallows they clung to their teacher and mentor, to their father and brother, Janusz Korczak, so that he might protect and preserve them. Janusz Korczak was marching, his head bent forward, holding the hand of a child, without a hat, a leather belt around his waist, and wearing high boots. A few nurses were followed by two hundred children, dressed in clean and meticulously cared for clothes, as they were being carried to the altar. (...) On all sides the children were surrounded by Germans, Ukrainians, and this time also Jewish policemen. They whipped and fired shots at them. The very stones of the street wept at the sight of the procession.

According to a popular legend, when the group of orphans finally reached the *Umschlagplatz*, an SS officer recognized Korczak as the author of one of his favorite children's books and offered to help him escape, but once again, Korczak refused. He boarded the trains with the children and was never heard from again.

Some time after, there were rumors that the trains had been diverted and that Korczak and the children had survived. There was, however, no basis to these stories. Most likely, Korczak was killed with his children in a

basis to these stories. Most likely, Korczak was killed with his children in a gas chamber upon their arrival to Treblinka. There is a memorial grave for him at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw

This 70 mm (2 $\frac{3}{4}$) diameter medal was minted in 1978 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Doctor Janusz Korczak, who died voluntarily with the children in the Nazi Death Camp Auschwitz in 1942. obverse – The portrait of Janusz Korczak, the figures of the children, the inscription – JANUSZ KORCZAK. Reverse - The inscription in Polish “The 100th anniversary of the birth, 1878 – 1978” The artist is a famous Polish engraver, Piotr Gawron



Mordecai Sheftall and the Wages of War

By Michael Feldberg

Director of the American Jewish Historical Society

The War for American Independence posed great hardships for many on the patriot side. The heat of the Philadelphia summer that plagued the Founding Fathers as they gathered to declare independence, or the harsh cold endured by Washington's troops as they wintered at Valley Forge, are but two such instances. Mordecai Sheftall, the leading Jewish citizen of Savannah, Georgia, an ardent patriot, was one of those who paid an extraordinary price for independence.



Mordecai Sheftall

Mordecai Sheftall's father, Benjamin, a deeply religious Jew, was an original white settler of the Georgia colony, having arrived in 1733. Benjamin Sheftall married his first wife, Perla, in 1734 and Mordecai was born in 1735. Perla died a year later and, in 1738, Benjamin married Hannah Solomons, with whom he had several more children.

Despite the opportunities presented by the new colony, Benjamin Sheftall never became wealthy; son Mordecai fared far better. By age 21, Mordecai acquired land for cattle raising and, by age 25, purchased a warehouse and wharf on the Savannah River.

Like his father, Mordecai Sheftall was a devoted and observant Jew. Savannah had only six Jewish families, but in 1771 Mordecai found a Jewish bride, Frances "Fannie" Hart, whom he "imported" from Charleston, South Carolina. Mordecai became a founding subscriber to Congregation Mickve Israel in Savannah and provided the community with land for its first Jewish cemetery. Sheftall was the Jewish representative among the original five incorporators of the Union Society, a non-denominational philanthropic association formed by Savannah's religious organizations to assist widows and poor children.

Like a majority of his co-religionists, Mordecai Sheftall cast his lot with rebellion against British rule. In 1776, Sheftall was elected chairman of the revolutionary committee that assumed control of local government in Savannah. In 1777, he was appointed Commissary General of Purchases and Issues to the Georgia militia and was thus responsible for supplying the colony's soldiers with food, clothing and materiel. Sheftall often reached into his own pocket to purchase supplies for the volunteers.

In 1778, having proven his skill and selflessness as Commissary General of Georgia, General Robert Howe appointed Sheftall to the post of Deputy Commissary General to the federal troops stationed in Georgia and South Carolina. Before Congress could confirm his role, however, he was captured in December 1778, along with his fifteen-year-old son, Sheftall Sheftall, in the battle to prevent Savannah from falling to British troops. Some of the outnumbered patriots escaped by swimming across the Savannah River, but the younger Sheftall could not swim. His father would not abandon him. With 185 other Americans, they were captured and imprisoned.

The British interrogated the Sheftalls under great duress, depriving them of food for two days. At one point, they were almost bayoneted by a drunken British soldier. Still refusing to provide information about the American's sources of supplies and refusing to renounce the patriot cause, father and son were transferred to the dank prison ship "Nancy," where the British deliberately offered Mordecai no meat other than pork, which he refused. After several months, the elder Sheftall was paroled to the town of Sunbury, Georgia, where he was kept under close British surveillance; his son remained on the "Nancy." At Mordecai's urging, Mrs. Sheftall took her other children to the relative safety of Charleston.

Separation from family weighed heavily on Mordecai. Through the intervention of friends, he was finally able to arrange for his son's parole to Sunbury under the same restrictive conditions on his own freedom of movement. Things looked promising when American military pressure on Savannah forced the British garrison to withdraw from Sunbury, but freedom for the Sheftalls did not follow. Local Tories began to beat and even kill patriots in Sunbury, especially parolees like the Sheftalls. Father and son managed to flee on an American brig headed for Charleston and a hoped for reunion with their family, but were captured by a British frigate and transported to Antigua, where they remained prisoners until the Spring of 1780. In June, both Sheftalls were paroled once more. They headed for Philadelphia, to which Mrs. Sheftall and the children had fled, yet again, for safety. There, despite his own financial hardships, Mordecai helped fund a new synagogue for Congregation Mikve Israel.

Mordecai spent the remainder of the war in Philadelphia, seeking to help both the American cause and his own financial condition by financing a privateer to capture and loot British vessels. His investment does not seem to have paid off; on its very first voyage, the ship ran aground. In 1783, when the war ended, Mordecai returned with his wife and children to Savannah, where the family resumed its life for several generations. The state of Georgia granted him several hundred acres of land in recognition of his sacrifices on behalf of independence. When he died in 1797 at the age of 62, his beloved home city of Savannah buried him with full honors in the Jewish cemetery he created.

The 11th medal in the Medallion History of the Jews of America features Mordecai Sheftall. The series was sculpted by Karen Worth.



STUTTHOF LIBERATION MEDAL

This 40 mm. cast bronze medal was minted in 1985 in 1991 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi Death Camp Stutthof in 1945 by the Soviet Army. It is a dramatic medal, with beautiful inscription.

The obverse shows the monument commemorating the death in the Nazi Death Camp Stutthof. The inscription in Polish – “For the Memory, not for the Vengeance Our Shadows” do ask. The reverse the inscription in Polish “The 40th anniversary of the liberation of the Concentration Camp, Stutthof - 9.V.1945



Stutthof (Sztutowo) was the first concentration camp built by the German Nazi regime outside of Germany, on September 2, 1939. It was located in a secluded, wet, wooded area west of the small town of Sztutowo in Danziger-Land County of Freistadt Danzig, 34 km east of the city of Danzig (Gdansk) in Poland. It was also the last camp liberated by the Allies, on May 9, 1945. As many as 100,000 people were deported to the camp. More than 60,000 people died in the camp.

The Nazi authorities of the Free City of Danzig were compiling material about known Jews as early as 1936, and also reviewing suitable places to build concentration camps in their area. Originally, Stutthof was a civilian internment camp under the Danzig police chief. In November 1941, it became a "labor education" camp, administered by the German Security Police. Finally, in January 1942, Stutthof became a regular concentration camp.

The original camp (known as the old camp) was surrounded by barbed-wire fences. It comprised eight barracks for the inmates and a "kommandantur" for the SS guards. In 1943, the camp was enlarged and a

new camp was constructed alongside the earlier one. It was surrounded by electrified barbed-wire fences and contained thirty new barracks.

The camp staff consisted of SS guards and, after 1943, Ukrainian auxiliaries. In 1942 the first female prisoners and SS women arrived in Stutthof, including Herta Bothe. A total of over 130 women served in the Stutthof complex of camps spread across the Baltic coast of Poland. Starting in June 1944, the SS in Stutthof began conscripting women from Danzig and the surrounding cities to come to Stutthof and train as camp guards because of a severe guard shortage.

A crematory and gas chamber were added in 1943, just in time to start mass executions when Stutthof was included on the "Endlösung" on June 1944. Mobile gas wagons were also used to complement the maximum capacity of the gas chamber (150 people per execution) when needed.

Conditions in the camp were brutal. Many prisoners died in typhus epidemics that swept the camp in the winter of 1942 and again in 1944. Those whom the SS guards judged too weak or sick to work were gassed in the camp's small gas chamber. Gassing with Zyklon B gas began in June 1944. Camp doctors also killed sick or injured prisoners in the infirmary with lethal injections. More than 60,000 people died in the camp.

The evacuation of prisoners from the Stutthof camp system in northern Poland began in January 1945. When the final evacuation began, there were nearly 50,000 prisoners, the overwhelming majority of them Jews, in the Stutthof camp system. About 5,000 prisoners from Stutthof subcamps were marched to the Baltic Sea coast, forced into the water, and machine gunned. The rest of the prisoners were marched in the direction of Lauenburg in eastern Germany. They were cut off by advancing Soviet forces. The Germans forced the surviving prisoners back to Stutthof. Marching in severe winter conditions and treated brutally by SS guards, thousands died during the march.

In late April 1945, the remaining prisoners were removed from Stutthof by sea, since Stutthof was completely encircled by Soviet forces. Again, hundreds of prisoners were forced into the sea and shot. Over 4,000 were sent by small boat to Germany, some to the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg, and some to camps along the Baltic coast. Many drowned along the way. Shortly before the German surrender, some prisoners were transferred to Malmö, Sweden, and released to the care of that neutral country. It has been estimated that over 25,000 prisoners, one in two, died during the evacuation from Stutthof and its subcamps.

LIEPAJA

Liepaja is the name of a city in Latvia and one of the oldest Baltic ports. Jews were not permitted to live there until the 18th century, and in 1797 there were only 19 Jewish inhabitants. Under czarist rule Liepaja was excluded from the Pale of Settlement, and only merchants of the first guild, artisans, and Jews who had lived in Courland before 1881 were permitted to reside there. The Jewish population numbered 1,348 in 1835 but by 1881 it had increased to 6,651 following the completion of the Libava-Romny railroad, linking Liepaja with the leading industrial and commercial centers of the Ukraine. By 1897 the Jewish community had risen to 9,454 consisting of the old-established Jewish residents of Courland among whom German cultural influences pre-dominated, and Jews who had moved to Liepaja from various parts of Russia.

Jews were prominent in the export trade in grain and lumber. They also owned about one-quarter of the industrial enterprises in the city, and about the same proportion of factory workers were Jews. When Latvia became independent after World War I, Liepaja lost its Russian hinterland, which was a severe setback for the development of the city. The Jewish population declined but nevertheless remained the third-largest Jewish community in the country, after Riga and Daugavpils (Dvinsk).

Before World War I and under a democratic government in Latvia (1918-34) a number of social and political groups, prominent rabbis, and communal leaders were active in the community. Yiddish and Hebrew schools, charitable institutions, and other communal organizations existed in Liepaja. Among its educational institutions were a government school for Jews (105 pupils), a Jewish general school for girls (90 pupils), and a Talmud Torah (108 pupils). The public schools had 333 Jewish children on their rolls. A Jewish loan and savings association was organized in 1901.

After the outbreak of the Soviet-German war, Liepaja was occupied by the Germans on June 29, 1941. On July 5, 1941, the local German military governor issued a number of anti-Jewish decrees, among them ordering the wearing of the yellow badge and a draft for forced labor. Jewish males aged sixteen to sixty were required to report daily at the city square, ostensibly for work. Of those who reported, some were sent on forced labor, and others were taken to prison. Jewish men who failed to report as ordered were arrested in the street or in their homes.

On July 8 and 9, all Jewish prisoners were taken to the Baltic seashore and shot to death there. In the last ten days of July the same pattern of arrests and murder was repeated, on a larger scale. At least a thousand Jewish men were murdered in that first month of German occupation.

In August 1941 the wave of arrests and mass murder was halted, and in the following two months the daily reporting to the city square also ceased. Most of the Jews had by then been dismissed from their posts, and were now issued work permits and put to work, mainly for the German army and police units in the city. Many Jews had their money, furniture, household goods, and valuables confiscated, and were expelled from their homes. A Jewish Altestenrat (Council of Elders) was set up, the Jews referred to it as "the community", headed by a businessman by the name of Izraelit, with a lawyer named Kagansky acting as his deputy. A Jewish home for the aged was in operation, as was the Linat Tsedek Hospital, the latter staffed by four doctors and a team of nurses and administrative helpers.

The killing of Jews, however, did not come to a stop, most of the victims being persons who were unfit for work. According to the reports submitted by the local detachment of the German *Sicherheitspolizei* (Security Police), 658 Jews were murdered in the period from September 22 to December 13, 1941. Of these, 454 were Jewish men and women unfit for work; that figure included the inmates of the Jewish home for the aged, the institution itself having been liquidated. In November 1941 the German military administration reported that 3,890 Jews were left in the town.

On December 13, 1941, a decree was issued ordering the Jews to stay at home on December 15 and 16. The *Sicherheitspolizei* issued new work permits for Jews, but only to skilled technicians working in the German police stations, a few artisans whose work was essential, the officers of the Altestenrat, and the staff of the hospital -- a total of no more than 300 to 350 permits. On the night of December 14, Latvian police rounded up Jews in their homes and took them to prison. The holders of the new work permits and their families were released, but all the other Jews were taken to Skeden, a fishing village on the Baltic, north of Liepaja, to be killed there. The massacre began on the morning of December 15, at which time the roundup of Jews in the city was in full swing, and it continued until noon on December 17. During those three days, 2,700 to 2,800 Jews, including women and children, were murdered.

On October 8, 1943, the eve of the Day of Atonement, the Liepaja ghetto was liquidated and its inhabitants taken to the Kaiserwald camp,

near Riga. Several Jews, with some children among them, were taken in by peasants. When the Red Army entered Liepaja, on May 9, 1945 only a few dozen Liepaja Jews survived the war. Most of the Jewish survivors did not return, preferring to stay in Displaced Persons' camps, from where they eventually left for Israel and other countries overseas.

An emergency currency note, issued in Liepaja in 1915 during World War I illustrates the sad tale of this Latvian city.



17th Piano Competition of the Polish Music in Slupsk in 1983



This medal has been minted in 1983 to commemorate the Polish-Jewish pianist **Arthur Rubinstein** (January 28, 1887 – December 20, 1982). He is widely considered as one of the greatest piano virtuosos of the 20th Century and received international acclaim for his performances of Chopin and Brahms and his championing of Spanish music.

Rubinstein was born **Artur Rubinstein** in Łódź, Poland to a Jewish family. He made his debut in Berlin in 1900, followed by appearances in Germany and Poland and further study with Paderewski. In 1904, he went to Paris, where he met the composers Ravel, Dukas, and the violinist Jacques Thibaud. He also played Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto No. 2 in the presence of the composer. Rubinstein made his New York debut at Carnegie Hall in 1906, and thereafter toured the United States, Austria, Italy, and Russia. In 1912, he made his London debut.

During World War I Rubinstein lived mainly in London, accompanying the violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. From 1916 to 1917, he toured Spain and South America, developing an enthusiasm for the music of Granados, Albéniz, de Falla, and Villa-Lobos. He was the dedicatee of Villa-Lobos' "*Rudepoema*", one of the most difficult piano pieces ever written.

During World War II, Rubinstein lived in the United States and became a naturalized citizen in 1946. He refused to play in post-war Germany because of the Nazi extermination of members of his family. He retired from the stage in 1976, as his eyesight and hearing were rapidly deteriorating. He became mostly blind in later life.

Although best known as a soloist, Rubinstein was also an outstanding chamber musician, partnering with such luminaries as Henryk Szeryng, Jascha Heifetz and Gregor Piatigorsky. In addition to Chopin, he also recorded the music of Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, Schumann, Dvořák, and Rachmaninoff. Rubinstein died in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1982 at age 95. His ashes were interred in Israel

PROFILE OF A MEDALIST

Mel Wacks was born in the Bronx, New York and spent his entire growing up years there. He graduated from CCNY where he received his Bachelor's Degree and then earned his Master's Degree from NYU. It was during this time that he met Esther and following their marriage, they moved to Long Island. Esther is a Registered Nurse and she and Mel have been married now for over 40 years. They have two daughters, Debra and Sheri and one granddaughter, Bella. Family is most important to Mel and he is very proud of the achievements of his two daughters. Debra earned a doctorate in Art History and has published numerous scholarly articles and Sheri is a jewelry designer in Southern California. Her work has been worn by a number of actresses in television and in the movies.

Mel worked for about 14 years as an electrical engineer with Norden, Airborne Instruments Laboratories (AIL), and PRD. One of the projects that he worked on was the highly secret SR-71 spy plane but at the time, he was unable to mention this fact to anyone, including Esther. Collecting coins had been a life-long hobby and Mel was fortunate in making it his occupation as well. He fondly remembers the very first coins in his collection that had been given to him by his father in 1949 in a small leather pouch. Of course, as a true collector, he still has the original pouch and coins.

The love of history and artistry associated with coins was the determining factor for Mel to eventually specialize in ancient Biblical coins, Judaic coins and medals. These were areas of collecting that had been largely overlooked by most collectors. Once Mel became highly versed in ancient coins of the Bible, he expanded his numismatic field even further by writing *The Handbook of Biblical Numismatics*. This book, in its entirety, can be found and read at www.amuseum.org/book.

Mel's greatest love became art medals although he doesn't remember exactly what sparked his interest, but it does combine his deep love and appreciation of art and history. His attention quickly turned from collecting medals to producing them. In 1969, Mel founded the Jewish-American Hall of Fame medal series and has greatly enjoyed working with many talented medalists. This series of medals has become the longest running series of non-government art medals issued in North America. The medals have inspired an award winning educational

website (www.amuseum.org/jahf) that is visited by over a half million people every year, many of them students.

Mel's interest in Israeli numismatics began when he joined the Israel Numismatic Society of New York in the 1960's. He became close friends with the late Morris Bram, Nat Sobel, the late Eddie Janis, and others who would go on to found the American Israel Numismatic Association (AINA). Mel says that the circle of numismatic life-long friends has been the best dividend he has gained from being a collector of coins. Although he cannot remember the exact year, Mel and Esther did travel to Israel on one of the AINA Study Tours. Esther was born in Jerusalem and they have visited Israel several times on their own. Her family lived in Israel during the War of Independence but her parents and an uncle returned to the United States because the British would not guarantee their safety.

To this day, Mel is still active and tries to attend meetings whenever possible of the last remaining INS Club, the INS/ICC of Los Angeles. As the current president of AINA, Mel attends board meetings and coin conventions throughout the year. He welcomes everyone to stop by the AINA/INS table to say hello.

Written by Donna J. Sims, NLG



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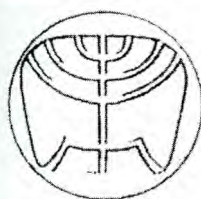
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